16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
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the seven whose incomes we inspected no change of property through this channel occurred. 585 431

A funeral brings with it certain distributive features. First, to prevent the bereaved from hurting themselves, many people must be present at all times in the days after the death. They must be generously fed, for generosity is important at all times. Then the grave-diggers are given something for their services. After interment all property is disposed of. The terms of the will are carried out, though they are concerned with only a part of the possessions given away. A house is literally cleaned of everything in any way valuable. People take what they wish, and the personal property of the deceased may be burned, especially at the death of a wife or husband. If a woman dies, the farm implements are kept for the widower by some close relative to prevent their being given away. If a man dies, his farm implements are either willed to a relative or, in case of no will, are given away to a kinsman. When everything is gone, the nearest relatives are expected to care for the bereaved and at the suitable interval of time give them new clothing, blankets, and food with which to start life over again. 765 [574] [767] [465] 768 765 431

Only one of the seven whose expenditures we investigated[1] was influenced by death; the deceased was his father's sister. Our informant took care of the old lady before her death, and others helped to buy groceries. No mention was made of property being received at death, and it is probable that she had little or none to dispose of. Only occasionally is death important as a means of distribution. 76

Outside the family an important system of distribution is gambling. This takes four main forms: hand game, pool or "snooky," poker, and horse racing. The hand games occur most frequently, particularly where many families congregate, as at the hay camps or the mine village. It is difficult to estimate how much changes hands through the course of an evening; we have heard of individuals winning $30 in an all-night session. More often the gain or loss is $2 to $5. 525 524 [541]

Pool or "snooky," played by young men in the village pool hall, draws bets of 10 to 50 cents from the participants. Spectators may also enter the game via side bets, or novices may be lured into betting high stakes by a display of ineptness on the part of an expert who later will play in his true form to snare the sucker.

[1]Cf. Appendix B.

A [See category 434, pp. 191-194--Analyst]

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remain the honoured and respected heads of extended families whose lives are not chaotic. The residuals of a broken household rejoin their more stable relatives, while the new household, if not already provided with a residence, joins another group of relatives. 592

Death furnishes a final point where social disorganization may occur. It is faced today by some with terror, by others with equanimity. This seems to depend upon whether the dying person is mainly Christian or Blackfoot in outlook. Christians, uncertain of the future and concerned with the process of moral retribution, contrast with the Blackfoot who have no idea of atonement, for the mythical Sand Hills are considered a haven where good and bad alike are welcomed by their deceased kinsmen. 761 [775]

As death approaches, relatives gather around the dying person to bid him farewell. The immediate kin usually remain until the end, while others come and go. All are expected to help defray the cost of a funeral. Sometimes in the last hours a priest will be summoned to baptize a person of Indian faith, just as a kind of insurance. 763

After the last breath the formalities of mourning begin. In former times the nearest kin would don old clothes, cut their hair, and gash themselves with a knife. Old clothes and dishevelled appearance still obtain, and a mourner is vigilantly guarded by kinsmen to prevent serious self-injury. In the meanwhile others are dispatched to get the coffin, arrange for the burial service, and dig the grave. The corpse is attired in best raiment.

Funerals follow a simplified white pattern suffused with Indian custom. Rather than leave the coffin in the open or under a tipi, burial has been adopted to forestall grave robbers. There are no white prayers at the grave, but as the coffin is lowered, an intense wailing begins by all spectators. Kinsmen who heap the earth on top of the coffin receive special gifts. Once, a few years ago, however, a man received special supernatural powers in a dream to handle corpses and bury them, and he took no payment for his services. 764 [767]

The subsequent mourning follows the Blackfoot pattern. If the deceased is a key member of a household, especially a spouse, all unwilled possessions to the last packet of cigarettes are given away because the sight of these articles could only increase the pain of separation by reminding one constantly of the deceased. If a sibling, a child, or aged person dies, the mourning is not so intense, and the useful household effects remain in the hands of the mourners. In any case some kind of give-away with many people present is 765 768